

# THE EUGENICS REVIEW

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*Editorial Offices: The Eugenics Society, 20 Grosvenor Gardens, London, S.W.1. Editor for the Society—Eldon Moore.*

"Eugenics is the study of agencies under social control that may improve or impair the racial qualities of future generations, either physically or mentally."

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## NOTES OF THE QUARTER

**A** HUMAN stud-farm,' 'the methods of the stockyard' are two of the terms most often used to express disgust at eugenic aims, contempt of the possibility of fulfilling them. It is therefore interesting to announce, as we do on page 15, that just such a human stud-farm, which adopts the methods of the animal breeder, has now been in existence for seven years and promises to grow and flourish still further. It has been founded and run, moreover, without any of that gross materialism or of those methods of bureaucratic tyranny which are so repugnant to Mr. G. K. Chesterton and which are really so foreign to practical eugenics.

Not the least interesting part of Monsieur Dachert's account of his experiment in positive eugenics, is that which describes his own mental Odyssey. Independent of Galton, Weismann, Mendel, and of all that was being thought in this country, he derived the ideal of eugenics straight from *The Origin of Species*, which was also Galton's inspiration. In a young, hard-working man that was no small effort in scientific and constructive imagination. To have cherished that ideal for twenty years, to have linked it with the garden city movement which had

hitherto lacked any inspiring element of greatness, to go to school in the most ancient and enduring of cultures, China, and finally to inspire a group of ordinary business men to support him in the realization of his ideal—this was good work.

We look forward to future citizens of the Jardins Ungemach being selected as much for their pedigrees as for their personal qualities, to a slow raising of the minimum standard, and to the supplementing of the present scheme by some well-devised system of family endowment. Meanwhile we can congratulate Monsieur Dachert on having brought to eugenics just that simple, inspiring appeal which it has hitherto lacked. And he, again like Galton, lays particular emphasis on the need for such an emotional—a religious—quality if eugenics is to become a social force. It is true that a succession of negative eugenic measures would bring about positive progress, and that some such policy is essential to racial health. But the prevention of amentia and the similar themes which have hitherto constituted practically the whole of serious eugenics, certainly lack that direct appeal which Galton demanded and which the Jardins Ungemach are striving to realize—the ideal of breeding a *better* man.



With Monsieur Dachert's example before him, the old-fashioned citizen can turn with less uneasiness to see what eugenic lessons can be learned from Mr. Buchanan Smith's article on methods of stock improvement. It contains two highly relevant passages :

"The success which has attended such legislation [for the slaughter or castration of 'scrub' bulls], both in Northern and Southern Ireland, has convinced many that if the rest of Great Britain were to adopt such 'scrub bull' legisla-

tion, it would be followed by an immense improvement in the quality of our cattle."

And, "The effect of the Stallion Licensing Act of 1919 [castration of defective stallions] is now being felt. No person qualified to give an opinion can be found to condemn that Act. The percentage of defective horses has fallen greatly. By merely eliminating the defective sires the average quality of the stock can be improved."

These passages, the fruit of parallel practical experience, seem an answer fully adequate to those who oppose sterilization on the grounds that it will be ineffective—opponents who, incidentally, never explain how segregation or 'socialization' could produce better results. There are, as a matter of fact, two good reasons for expecting the sterilization of human defectives to have an even swifter and surer effect than the castration of defective bulls and stallions. Firstly, only the males of domestic animals are thus prevented from breeding, while the sterilization of humans would stem the defective strain in both sexes. Secondly, the genetics of those defects—even amentia—which would render a man or woman a fit subject for sterilization, are a great deal better known than those of the vaguely, but undoubtedly, defective bull or stallion. Generally speaking, indeed, and excepting such laboratory specimens as *Drosophila* and *Oenothera*, we know more of the genetics and physiology of man than we do of any other organism.



Panel doctors in Worcestershire, Warwickshire, and Northamptonshire have been asked by healthy patients for advice as to their fitness for marriage. This demand for a new service has naturally troubled the insurance and panel committees, one of which applied to the Minister of Health for a ruling. The Minister's reply was, roughly, that he could see no reason to consider such pre-marital examinations outside the duties of a panel doctor. The Worcestershire Panel Committee countered with the argument that

proper pre-marital examinations could, in most cases, be made only by specialists, and were therefore outside the scope of medical benefit.

And there, for the moment, the matter rests; but we shall doubtless hear more of it before very long. If the legal issue has been raised in three counties, the occurrence is probably fairly common in all, and the demand will eventually have to be met. To us the news is simply a very encouraging sign of the growth of a sense of responsibility in a class which has not hitherto realized the need for biological fitness in marriage.



It is with the greatest regret that we record the resignation from the *Society* of Professor E. W. MacBride, who was one of the first established biologists to give us the inestimable value of his name and support. For twenty years he has been a loyal and uncompromising supporter of eugenics, and has now only parted company with the *Society* on a matter of office routine. The Council, while unable to meet his views on this subject, deeply deplores his resignation and wishes to put on record its appreciation of his long and valued service.



It is entirely a coincidence that in this REVIEW two independent illustrations occur of the newer, more biological attitude now being adopted by anthropologists towards racial questions. Dr. Mjöen frankly regards man through the eyes of a geneticist, and observes the physiological, and especially endocrinological, consequences of crossing divergent types. On page 81 Professor Fleure reviews Sir Arthur Keith's development of this attitude into one which regards the endocrine system as the fundamental determiner of physical and temperamental type, and which expects to find in that system the roots of racial differences. But Sir Arthur's principal contribution to anthropological thought is his steady refusal to accept the existing and inadequate criteria of race, while at the same time he looks at

the races of mankind with a Darwinian eye—as varieties in all stages of formation. Such an attitude seems almost obvious, but it is not as common as it should be—not so common, perhaps, as Professor Fleure believes—among anthropologists who, in reaction from early racial theories, have lately tended towards the other extreme of confusing race with culture and ignoring the genetic basis of both. Though we have at present no technique for accurately measuring or stating the differences between, for instance, Italians and Englishmen, it is highly unscientific to assume that those differences do not exist.



News from Russia is so rare that any information, even at third-hand, is of interest; and we were pleased to receive a long report appearing in the *North China Star* of Peking. It gives the substance of an interview granted to the *Moscow News* by a representative of the People's Commissariat of Health, and deals with the Soviet's attitude towards birth control.

The official claims that his is the only government which makes contraception an integral part of its policy, while it considers that sex is a matter of strictly private concern between its men and women citizens—"there can be no legal distinctions between a registered marriage and an informal, unofficial union." Herein Russia is probably unique among civilized States, though in his first statement the official is incorrect. Holland, at least, has for long made the regulation of contraception a government affair. In Russia the National Board of Health directs the policy through its local branches, its object being to provide "safe, simple, inexpensive and harmless contraceptives to all of those in need."

Though "in the Russia of to-day, the approach to the entire problem is purely scientific, freed completely from legal, moral, or religious shackles," research does not seem to have advanced much further than in other countries. The hunt for the ideal contraceptive continues, according to

the report, and there is much controversy, as elsewhere, as to the best of those so far devised.

The report should probably be interpreted as a description of the aims, rather than of the achievements, of the U.S.S.R.—whose birth rate, incidentally, is the highest in Europe—even though it claims 40 birth control clinics in Moscow alone. But, true to the 'cannon fodder' ideal, "the State feels that it is the duty of each able-bodied woman to bear three to four children during her lifetime, but endeavours to educate mothers to space the children properly. . . ."

"The regulations covering abortion proceed from the same sound scientific basis. On the assumption that the embryo in its earlier stages is not yet a human being, abortions are allowed on purely social grounds during the first two-and-a-half months of pregnancy." They must, however, be performed by qualified medical men and in the State clinics, while contraceptives are recommended to each woman for the future. It is claimed that the risks from such abortions "have been minimised, as shown by the infinitesimal death rate."



Through the generosity of Lady and Miss Darwin, who have founded a Darwin Trust with about £275 a year, a very considerable study of the causation of amentia is to be undertaken. It is the Royal Eastern Counties Institution for the Mentally Defective, at Colchester, which has been thus endowed, and the Trust has been augmented by the Medical Research Council's decision to contribute nearly half of the salaries and expenses of a full-time research medical officer and a social investigator. Dr. Lionel S. Penrose, who has recently been a research student at the Cardiff City Mental Hospital, is the officer, and the investigator is Miss Newlyn, who has for some years been working for the Devonshire Voluntary Association for Mental Welfare and who, as we have good reason to know, has done some remarkably thorough pedigree studies.

Work has already begun on a searching

inquiry into the physical and mental characteristics, the home environment, and the family histories of 1,400 inmates of the Colchester institution, and we confidently look forward to valuable results. The Wood Report, followed by this Society's sterilization activities—to say nothing of its twenty years' work in preparing the public mind—have been mainly responsible for this and other evidences that amentia is at last being widely considered as a serious social problem.



The London School of Economics has now published (through P. S. King & Son) *Forty Years of Change*, which is the first volume of its immense *New Survey of London Life and Labour*. Besides confirming—were confirmation needed—the belief that the welfare and standard of life of the poorer classes have greatly improved since Charles Booth started his *Life and Labour in London*, this volume deals at length with many other matters of intimate concern to eugenists—Housing, Health, Education, Unemployment, Poor Law, Crime. Of especial importance is Section 2, wherein Professor A. L. Bowley deals with Area and Population and devotes much attention to density of population and to birth and death rates. A volume so considerable—over four hundred pages of solid fact—needs time for adequate digestion, and will be reviewed in our July number.



A post in human biology has now been created, from the Macaulay endowment, at the Animal Breeding Research Department of Edinburgh University, and has been accepted by Mr. J. A. Fraser Roberts, who will start work in the autumn.

Mr. Roberts, who is a Fellow of this *Society*, will be best known to readers of the *REVIEW* as the author of the article,

“Eugenics Without Mendelism,” in our last October number. Though still in the early thirties, he has made his mark in biology; a Cambridge man (Natural Sciences Tripos—Physiology, Zoology, and Chemistry) a B.Sc. of Agriculture (Wales), and an F.R.S.E., his first appointment was an agricultural research scholarship at the University of Wales (Bangor). From there he went to the Animal Breeding Research Department of Edinburgh, where he shortly became a member of the staff, as Research Assistant, and later as Senior Research Assistant. In 1928 he was appointed Head of the Biology Department of the British Research Association for the Woollen and Worsted Industries, Leeds—the post which he now holds. His particular faculty is that of interpreting the biological data presented to him, and his most successful work has been upon populations of sheep and cattle. He has for several years taken an interest in human problems, and has therein betrayed the practical common sense which is more often the prerogative of the commercial breeder than of the academic biologist. His general attitude is well exemplified in his book reviews in pages 67, 79, and 83 of this number, while the freshness and originality of mind—in the best sense—that he brings to the complexities of our subject, are evident in the entirely new approach he has adopted towards the genetics of amentia.

Edinburgh is thus the second of our great universities to make a eugenic appointment, and it now seems a far cry from the days, only just before the War, when the then *Eugenics Education Society* was ‘guyed,’ along with other crank bodies, on the stages of the music-halls. The only matter for regret—at any rate for those who wish to take a pride in their universities—is that Cambridge and Oxford now lag so far behind London and Edinburgh. The two former, however, are at least distinguished by possessing undergraduate Eugenics Societies of their own, and we can perhaps console ourselves with the reflection that the young are wiser than the old.